

▶ LEARN

GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR PC WITH OUR PRACTICAL TIPS

Contents

HOW TO...

Explore the Earth 222

Enjoy a fascinating virtual reality glimpse of the world from the air using Google Earth

Create a timesheet 223

A comprehensive spreadsheet that can help you calculate your working hours and earnings

Remove blemishes from photos 224

Use digital trickery to get rid of unsightly marks

Back up your hard disk 225

Protect those precious files from a hard disk disaster with the help of Acronis True Image

Create email forms in Excel 226

Cut out the clutter and hassle of paper forms using a flexible electronic version you can email easily

Get creative with focal length 228

There's more to zoom than meets the eye; put your pictures in perspective with this important function

Encode smaller MP3s 229

Less is more when it comes to music file sizes, so find out how to fit more tunes on your MP3 player

Hints and tips 229

Find the perfect word • Handle suspicious emails

HOW IT WORKS

Search engines 230

We take search engines for granted, but without these industrious online agents working on our behalf we'd be lost and frustrated. Mike James considers how search engines place a world of facts and figures within easy reach

ADVANCED WINDOWS

Internet Explorer 7 249

Can the new version of Explorer improve the way we use the internet, or is it a cunning marketing ploy? Karl Wright puts his beta copy to the test

HOW TO...

Explore the Earth

If you want to know how it feels to have the whole world in your hands, just try Google's latest service.

Xavier Cortez explains how all kinds of fascinating views of the planet can be yours for free

Google Earth is a contender for the greatest software ever. Once installed, this 10MB download taps into terabytes of satellite photography, mapping and streaming data over the internet to your PC as required. You need Windows XP, a broadband connection and a fast PC to run it. The recommended specs are a 2.4GHz processor, 512MB of RAM and a 32MB graphics card. Just download it free from <http://earth.google.com>, and prepare to spend hours gazing at your monitor.

1 Google Earth initially presents you with the Earth as it would appear from space. For a breathtaking first impression, type your postcode into the search box at the top left

and press Enter. Within a few seconds, you'll have travelled from 15,000 miles above the Earth to half a mile above your house. The amount of detail varies for different locations, but if you're lucky you'll be able to identify your roof and maybe even your car parked outside. This is just the beginning of Google Earth's talents.

2 Click and drag the globe and explore it at your leisure. You can even set it spinning by dragging the mouse and quickly letting go. Use the mouse's scroll wheel to zoom in and out, and hold down the wheel button and move the mouse to change the viewing angle. By switching on Terrain from the options at the bottom, the

Earth will be shown with mountains, valleys and other contours all rendered in 3D. Search for famous world landmarks or places you've visited on holiday, or alternatively find them unaided by roaming the globe.

3 The software has plenty of practical uses. You can choose to show roads, hotels, restaurants, banks, grocery stores, golf courses, volcanoes – the list of options under the Layers tab is enormous. Switch the search function to Local Search and type a word such as badminton or jellyfish, and the software performs a behind-the-scenes web search to find establishments in your current view that relate to your search. **ES**

